

WORKING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Investing in Our Community
With Federal Funds

Communities here in Connecticut and all around the country could use some economic assistance during these tough times. This year, the federal government awarded the Greater Hartford area, including Bristol, over \$5 million in stimulus funding for weatherization assistance. This money will help families in need make their homes more energy efficient, while giving a boost to our local economy.



Greenway Coming
to Plainville

The Farmington Canal Heritage Trail runs all the way from New Haven to Massachusetts, and only one town has yet to develop plans for its portion of the trail: Plainville. In order complete the trail, I helped secure the town a \$45,000 grant to chart an appropriate path running between Northwest Drive and Cronk Road. The finished trail could include a bicycle and walking path and will provide Plainville residents with a great local choice for recreation.

GROWING JOBS; SAVING MONEY

Ensuring Connecticut's Competitiveness

Growing jobs must be a top priority for state government right now—and that means ensuring that Connecticut's business climate remains friendly. That's why, with unanimous support, we passed a new law that requires the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) to annually evaluate the competitiveness of Connecticut as a place for doing business. This law also requires DECD to prepare and submit a report of its findings to the governor and the General Assembly.

State Savings on Prescription Drugs

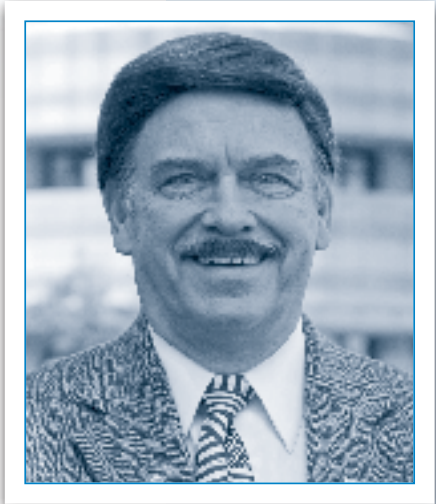


The state of Connecticut spends hundreds of millions of dollars on prescription drugs for senior citizens, those with disabilities, low-income families with children and state employees. Currently, the state has no process by which we can ensure that all the drugs are being purchased as cheaply as possible. So the General Assembly passed a law that requires the state to develop a plan for the bulk purchasing of pharmaceuticals. Developing and implementing such a plan will ensure that state taxpayer dollars are spent efficiently on prescription drugs.



State Senator
**Thomas
Colapietro**

Legislative Office Building, Room 3500, Hartford, CT 06106-1591
Capitol Phone: 1-800-842-1420
E-mail: Colapietro@senatedems.ct.gov
Web: www.SenatorColapietro.cga.ct.gov




Dear Neighbor,

The global recession has hit Connecticut hard. People have lost their jobs and even their homes. At the same time the state's budget deficit reached a record high of \$8.5 billion.

Our goal this session was to pass a budget that would hurt the least amount of people; we were determined to help grow jobs and protect the working families and middle-class folks who are struggling to make ends meet as well.

We did this by passing a budget that makes tough cuts, protects funding for small businesses and avoids across-the-board tax increases. We also passed bills that help fight breast cancer and autism, protect consumers from identity theft and preserve our environment. We truly passed a budget with a heart. These are only a few items passed. If you need more information, please feel free to call my office.

As always I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Thomas Colapietro
State Senator

I'm proud to
represent the
31st Senate District:
Bristol,
Harwinton,
Plainville
& Plymouth

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State Senator
Thomas Colapietro
 31st District

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LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

Fighting for a Fair Budget

In September, the General Assembly and Governor Rell agreed on a budget for the next two years. The compromise budget includes more than **\$3 billion in spending cuts—the largest reduction in state history**. We did it by cutting costs in every agency and all parts of government.

At the same time, we were able to protect middle-class families, the elderly, children and the poor from devastating cuts to critical services. We also made the tax code fairer for by raising revenues from joint filers making more than \$1 million a year. The budget will help stabilize Connecticut's economy and help families survive this difficult time.



Protecting Families from Reckless Cuts

Despite efforts by some to make reckless cuts, I stood up for these and other important programs and services:

- ▶ **The LIFE STAR** medical helicopter has helped save lives in every town and city in Connecticut. It is an especially vital service for those in rural parts of the state.
- ▶ **Higher education scholarships** help students and their parents afford college. A recession is the worst time to reduce scholarships and financial aid.
- ▶ **Public libraries** add so much to our towns and cities. Across-the-board cuts, as some proposed, would have hit them hard.
- ▶ **School-based health centers** help protect children from epidemics, such as the flu. Deep cuts to these centers would have undermined public health.



Criminal Penalties for Identity Theft

Identity theft is a serious crime that can have devastating consequences for victims who spend, on average, \$1,180 and 60 hours cleaning up their credit record. Damaged credit makes it tough to get a good interest rate on a car loan, home mortgage or credit card. This year, we created a new law that expands the definition of "identity theft" and increases the penalties for those who target seniors.



Cracking Down on Credit Card Companies

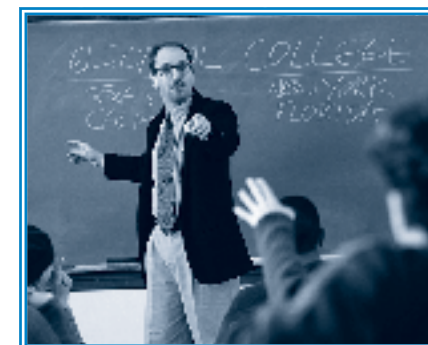
For years, credit card companies have solicited students on college campuses. As a result, more and more college students face insurmountable credit card debt. Parents also find themselves responsible



for their children's debt. That's why we passed a law putting restrictions on the issuance and marketing of credit cards on public college campuses. Credit card companies must hold financial education sessions on campuses where they are marketing. This law forbids credit card companies from automatically taking debt collection action against a student's parent. All told, it is a dramatic step toward preventing youth from incurring debt before they start their professional careers.

Addressing the Teacher Shortage

Connecticut faces a teacher shortage in the near future and if nothing is done, students could face the fallout. This year the legislature took action by modernizing the teacher certification process and streamlining the way in which those interested in teaching actually become teachers. Additionally, this law will provide greater access to the Teach for America program, which encourages new college graduates to teach in challenging school districts.



WORKING FOR SENIORS & VETERANS

Seniors & Veterans Expo a Success



Hundreds of area residents attended my second annual Seniors & Veterans Expo at Bristol Eastern High School in August. Area residents gathered information, spoke with officials from government agencies and learned more about the various social services that are available to seniors and veterans.

At-Home Care for the Elderly

Many senior citizens in Connecticut will soon have increased access to personal, non-medical care due to the enactment of a new law I supported. Qualifying seniors can receive financial aid for in-home personal care assistants to help with such things as bathing, dressing and meal preparation. This approach is more desirable for seniors and more cost-effective for the state. It allows elderly residents to hire their preferred assistants without using a home health-care agency.

Helping Those Who've Sacrificed for Our State and Country

Many families are having a hard time making ends meet right now, and this includes military families. The General Assembly passed legislation that expands eligibility for the Military Relief Fund to immediate relatives of Connecticut-domiciled armed forces members, including Connecticut National Guard members who are not on active duty. This fund is used by the state to pay for essential personal or household goods or services, such as repairs, uninsured medical services, transportation or school supplies if paying for them is a hardship because of a member's service.

